



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF THE
PROBATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

PAUL J. KNIERIM, JUDGE
Probate Court Administrator

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To: Senate Co-Chair Andrew McDonald
House Co-Chair Michael Lawlor
Senate Ranking Member John Kissel
House Ranking Member Arthur O'Neill
Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Paul J. Knierim, Judge
Probate Court Administrator

Re: RB 6404 An Act Concerning Indemnification and Immunity for
Certain Child Protection Attorneys and Guardians Ad Litem.

Date: March 4, 2009

The Office of the Probate Court Administrator supports the concept embodied in this bill.

Counsel and guardians ad litem are frequently appointed by the courts in connection with matters involving child custody and child protection. Their services are essential to protect the rights of the children who are the subject of such proceedings. The work is particularly challenging because attorneys and guardians often receive little meaningful guidance from their clients. At the same time, they are frequently thrust into the middle of contentious family situations and subject to considerable pressure from other parties. They typically receive very modest compensation for their services. The protection afforded by this bill is both appropriate in light of the work performed and necessary to ensure that courts have an available pool of qualified individuals to serve in these positions.

While this bill relates specifically to matters in the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters, it should be noted that similar appointments are routinely made in the probate courts. Matters involving the removal of parent as guardian, termination of parental rights, adoption, paternity, and emancipation are all handled in the probate courts. Judges frequently appoint counsel and/or guardians ad litem to

represent parties in these proceedings. Should the Committee decide to act favorably on this bill, I would ask that consideration be given to expanding the protection to attorneys and guardians ad litem appointed in these probate matters.